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Lepers
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Where Can He Go?

THE STORY OF A U. S. A. LEPER SOLDIER

American Committee

THE MISSION TO LEPERS

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156 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

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The Story of a U. S. A. Soldier Leper

*W. M. Danner, American Secretary

156 Fifth Avenue, New York

He was a stalwart and handsome fellow, in his junior year at college; buoyant, too, and full of high spirits, for life was going particularly well with him and his prospects were very bright, when—America entered the war. Immediately renouncing his plans, young McDonald, although born and brought up in a British colony, answered America's call, and bringing two of his chums to his way of thinking, the three enlisted for the Army, the first to leave that college for service with the American forces. There followed four months of rigorous training, after which these three soldiers were shipped to France.

They had not been long in France when McDonald's heretofore vigorous health began to fail. He noticed that he was very easily fatigued, there was a strange numbness in his hands and feet, and a swelling of the glands. These symptoms he reported to the doctors of the regiment, who prescribed two days of rest. The rest, however, did not benefit him, but getting no satisfaction from further complaints, McDonald ceased to make them.

Called To the Front

Shortly after, the regiment entrained for another part of France and was assigned to guard duty. After a month of this, the welcome news came that they were to be removed to the front. There was general rejoicing and spirits ran high at the prospect of encountering the real thing.

Disappointed Hopes

Unhappily, in McDonald's case, these hopes were soon dashed to the ground. He was removed to a base hospital to undergo a minor operation and while there came under the observation of some skin specialists. The patients in the ward being lined up for regular inspection, a group of physicians passed down the line. One of them, noticing some spots on McDonald's face—which he himself had not observed—asked permission to examine his body. This inspection revealed similar spots on the back and the other doctors becoming interested began also to examine him, meanwhile asking many questions:

**Courtesy of The Continent.*

Christmas Festivities (?)

The first two weeks, including Christmas and New Year's day, were spent in the harbor. On Christmas day, a fine dinner was served to all on board, and that night a concert was given, McDonald being the only man on the ship who could not attend it.

The big assembly hall where the entertainment was held was directly beneath his cabin, and by lying down and putting his ear to the floor, the lonely fellow could hear roars of laughter and occasional snatches of music and song. "What a contrast!" he thought. "Down there, a large hall, brilliantly and festively lighted, and thronged with carefree human beings, happy and exhilarated with one another's company—up here, this dismal cabin with one discouraged occupant, alone in the darkness and barred from the festivities below—an outcast from his kind!"

Disheartened, indeed, he was, for at this time McDonald supposed his disease to be quite incurable, and much more contagious than is really the case. If only he might have heard a word of encouragement—if he could have been told that better things were in store for such unfortunates as he!

At length the steamer started, and while the shores of France receded, McDonald's thoughts were heavy, as he recalled the high hopes and ambitions and dreams with which he had landed on those same shores but a few months before.

The memories of that voyage will always be to him a nightmare of horror. On account of the U-boat menace no lights were allowed at night or even at dusk, and in total darkness, often for sixteen hours at a stretch, McDonald was alone with his thoughts and deprived of all means of forgetting them. He saw no one but the doctor, and his attendant, as he would leave his meals at the door. He was allowed an hour's exercise on deck at night, under the supervision of his attendant, but in general the severity of the weather made this impracticable.

Sixteen Hours At a Stretch

So there he was in his dark cabin, with only his discouraged thoughts for company. One wonders how it was that he escaped going mad. The idea of the extreme contagiousness of his disease so possessed his mind that when he was told where he should go in case of submarine attack or practice, he vowed he would not endanger the lives of his companions by so doing, but would take a life raft instead. He took no part in the practice for "abandon ship," dreading, poor fellow, the curious and pitying stares he would be sure to encounter. Either he was not missed on these occasions, or his absence was ignored, for he received no reprimand.

The voyage of two weeks was made longer by a week spent at a Southern coaling port, but at last, after five weeks of existence in that dark cabin, McDonald saw once more New York harbor and the Statue of Liberty. Never will he forget that moment, for with the sight flashed out in sharp and vivid contrast his happy good byes to them less than a year before, and the dreams he had then of their welcome when he should return and with his comrades receive the cheers and plaudits of the multitude as they marched up Fifth Avenue with flags flying and crowned with victory and honor. Even when he had pictured himself as dying on the battlefield he had thought he would be present in spirit at the great home-coming, and that his comrades would be thinking of the vacancy he had left.

Where Shall He Go?

But now—he was alone, unheralded, with a task left undone, and sentenced to a doom worse, he thought, than death. Coming *home*? Where could he his home? No state wanted him. Still less would any hospital want him. No cheers for him. Only frightened looks and closed doors. What would happen to him? Where could he go? Several days passed before he received word from the doctors in charge of his case that a place of abode had been discovered "Somewhere in America." The place to which he was sent was more like a jail than a hospital. The windows were enclosed with bars of iron—jail-like. The Government of the United States had no place to send this leper boy, an educated young college student, who had offered his life at his country's call.

Do we need a Leprosarium in the United States? Probably there are more than one thousand persons afflicted with leprosy in our country—certainly there are known cases of this ages-old disease in 19 different states and pitiful as is McDonald's case there are hundreds more—many of whom are not so well cared for as he.

Congress has appropriated $250,000.00 to purchase grounds and build a National Leprosarium. The U. S. Public Health Service are seeking for a favorable site on which to locate the needed equipment. Ultimately McDonald and the other U. S. A. lepers will be given all the comforts that good equipment under expert management can provide.

Let us hope that that happy day may soon appear.

Two Million Other Lepers Need Help

The estimate given by Dr. Victor G. Heiser, of the Rockefeller Foundation, and formerly Health Director of the Philippine Islands, indicating an approximate minimum of two million lepers in the world, has re-emphasized the importance of the work for which The Mission to Lepers is responsible. This International and Interdenominational Society was founded in 1874 by Mr. W. C. Bailey, representing one of the American foreign mission boards. Yearly the work has grown and the Society has expanded. Its four present objectives are:

(a) To preach the Gospel to the lepers.
(b) To relieve their dreadful sufferings.
(c) To supply their simple wants.
(d) In time to rid the world of leprosy.

(a) The lepers respond gladly to Christian teaching. Their sincere joy in service offers fine examples for emulation. There are now over 6,000 baptized Christians in the Leper Homes connected with this Mission, and we need your help to maintain the work.

(b) Suffering always appeals. Note the way in which relief is rushed to our war sufferers, but what war sufferers today would exchange places with the leper.

The Mission to Lepers, through direct contributions, by visitation in many lands, and by its relationship to the work in no less than ninety-two hospitals and homes for lepers, has relieved and saved many thousands. Doctors and nurses have multiplied their ministries by teaching lepers themselves the art of bandaging and dressing. In connection with the formulae for using chaulmoogra oil worked out and demonstrated in the American Asylum under government control in the Philippine Leper Colony, clinical records in the Mission Stations show that under treatment some two hundred cases have been free from traces of the leprosy for more than two years. Research is being continued, new remedies and new applications of old ones sought, with the result that many patients have been released on parole.

(c) Lepers, homeless and hungry, rejoice to receive food, clothing and shelter. They are surprised to find sympathy. When physically able, they gladly undertake to grow gardens, raise fruit, and care for their cooking and clothes. In the Mission Stations, ample care can be given with an approximate annual expense of only $25.00 for each patient. Such a great service for such a small amount ought to touch the heart of every lover of suffering men, women and children everywhere.

(d) In the middle ages, France and Great Britain had many lepers. In more recent years there were thousands in Norway. Now Great Britain and France have practically none, and there are few in Norway.

In the Philippine Islands ten years ago there was said to be 9,000; now but 5,000. In the Hawaiian Islands twelve years ago, over 1,300; now, half as many. What has wrought this change? The answer is—segregation. Almost 4,000 years ago this plan was instituted by Jehovah. It brings results. And you can help.

The Mission to Lepers is leading in a world movement for the segregation of lepers in all lands. Governments and mission boards are cooperating in the United States, Japan, Korea, China, India, and Siam. Your support is urgently needed.

If as estimated one person out of every seven hundred and fifty living today is suffering from this preventable disease, who is responsible We are. We can at least help stay the plague.

The American Committees required annual budget of $219,150 can be met if:

20	people	give.....	$1000	each.....	$20,000
40	"	"	500	"	20,000
80	"	"	250	"	20,000
300	"	"	100	"	30,000
600	"	"	50	"	30,000
2000	"	"	25	"	50,000
2500	"	"	10	"	25,000
4830	"	"	5	"	24,150
10370				Grand Total.....	$219,150

Any amount however large or small will be gratefully acknowledged.

Are you ready to do your part to help this Society realize its four objectives? Then send your gift, which is so much needed today, to any local representatives of The Mission to Lepers or to Mr. Fleming H. Revell, Treasurer, 158 Fifth Avenue, New York City.